

# Domestic Crimes

Domestic crimes include all offenses committed against family members, spouses and ex-spouses, roommates, romantic partners and ex-romantic partners. The Police Department generally responds to between 1,500 and 2,000 domestic calls for service each year, resulting in 700 to 1,000 incident reports and 250 to 350 arrests. Underreporting is a serious problem with domestic crimes (experts estimate that the police department receives a report for only one out of every three domestic crimes), so the reliability of these figures is uncertain.

## Categorical Breakdown of Domestic Incidents

Crime	1999	2000	Change
Dispute/Disturbance (no physical abuse)	268	328	+22%
Simple Assault	217	228	+5%
Violation of a Restraining Order	111	121	+9%
Aggravated Assault	111	109	+2%
Threatening	83	82	-1%
Telephone Calls	36	43	+19%
Larceny	41	38	-7%
Vandalism	30	34	+13%
Burglary	22	18	-18%
Check Forgery	3	13	+333%
Auto Theft	6	7	+17%
Trespassing	3	6	+100%
Kidnapping	3	3	None
Stalking	2	3	+50%
Rape	2	1	-50%
Indecent Assault	4	1	-75%
Disorderly Conduct	3	0	-100%
Robbery	3	0	-100%
Peeping & Spying	1	0	-100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>+14%</b>

A large number of domestic calls to which officers respond involve no crime—simply a loud argument, classified as a “domestic disturbance.” In 2000, these calls made up 32% of all domestic reports. While not technically a crime, these domestic disturbances can still be a form of abuse, and they may escalate into more serious offenses if they go unaddressed. The second most common domestic incident, accounting for 22% of the total for 2000, is the “simple assaults” (assault without a weapon and with no serious injury). Aggravated assaults and restraining order violations combined for 22% of the overall total. Incidents occurred most often between romantic partners or ex-romantic partners (54%), and between spouses or ex-spouses (19%). A woman is victimized in eighty percent of all domestic crime incidents.

Increases in domestic disputes, simple assaults and violation of restraining orders fueled a 14% increase

in domestic incidents in 2000. A disturbing trend observed last year was the significant rise in reporting of disputes within the family with a 30% increase in parent /progeny / sibling disputes.

The Cambridge Police have adopted a “zero tolerance” policy on domestic violence and make on-scene arrests for all domestic crimes in which an offender can be located. Domestic violence crosses all socio-economic, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, and age boundaries. The police, however, receive more calls in neighborhoods where individuals live in close quarters, and where neighbors contact the police for assistance.

Offender-Victim Relationship	1999 % Of Total	2000 % Of Total
(Ex-) Partner	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>
(Ex-) Spouse	<b>21%</b>	<b>19%</b>
(Foster or step) Parent/Child	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Sibling	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Roommate	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Other Relationship	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>

## If You Are a Victim of Domestic Violence

Understand that domestic abuse generally gets worse and occurs more frequently when victims do not seek help. There is help available, either through the Cambridge Police Domestic Violence Unit or through a local battered women’s shelter. At the very least, seek help from a family member or friend, and create a safety plan for you and your children.

### Important Telephone Numbers:

CPD Domestic Violence Unit .....	349-3371
Transition House ( <i>shelter in Cambridge</i> ) .....	661-7203
Renewal House ( <i>shelter in Boston</i> ) .....	566-6881
Respond ( <i>shelter in Somerville</i> ).....	623-5900
Dating Violence Intervention Project.....	868-8328
Cambridge/Somerville Legal Services .....	494-1800
Community Legal Services Center .....	661-1010
Emerge ( <i>counseling for abusers</i> ).....	547-9879

Remember, domestic abuse also includes emotional abuse, which can include insults, threats, bad treatment in front of others, assigning false blame, and attempts to control where you go, what you do, and whom you see. This type of behavior can be a warning sign for physical abuse down the road, if it hasn’t already occurred.